



## Colman Building

Landmarks Preservation Board - Briefing Packet 1  
August 5, 2021





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# BUILDING HISTORY AND PROJECT SCOPE

**Colman Building**  
811 1st. Avenue Seattle, WA 98104

The Colman Building is located at 811 First Avenue, occupying the west side of the block, between Columbia and Marion streets. James Colman, a Scottish businessman, commissioned the original in 1889 after the Seattle fire. The Colman building was designed by London-born architect Stephen Joseph Meany, who also designed the Occidental Hotel at Pioneer Square. It was initially a two-story unreinforced brick masonry structure with a basement and sub-basement. The original Victorian-style facade included rusticated stone-faced arched windows on the Columbia and Marion street facades, with large storefronts on First Avenue, with a stucco-covered brick facade.

In 1904 the original first and second level facades were remodeled, and four additional stories were constructed on top to create the present six-story building. The 1904 remodel/addition was designed by Danish architect August J. Tiedemand, who also designed the 3-story stone warehouse building to the west, known as the Colman Block Annex, in 1895. The facades of the renovation and addition were designed in the Chicago School style, with large rectilinear window openings, smooth brick surfaces, and a large, projecting copper cornice. The original arched windows at the Columbia and Marion Street facades were removed and replaced. All that was retained of the original 1889 facades are the cast-iron columns between the storefront bays on First Avenue.

The Colman building has had many tenants over its 125 year life, with mostly office tenants at the upper floors and banking and retail tenants at the ground level. The Colman building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972, and in 1988 it was designated as a Seattle Landmark.

The following elements have been modified since the 1904 renovation/ addition:

**1910 -1915:** A penthouse was added near the center of the west.

**1910 -1915:** A large ornamented cast iron and glass canopy was added to the east, north, and south façades.

**1920 - 1929:** The first-floor entry lobby was remodeled by architect Arthur Lamont Loveless, with ornate, art deco style finishes, including cast bronze ornamentation designed by sculptor Dudley Pratt and Arthur Lamont Loveless. The southeast corner exterior facade on the first floor was also re-clad in smooth green marble for the Peoples First Avenue Bank.

**1976:** The Colman Annex and connecting pedestrian bridges were demolished.

**1982-1988:** Extensive renovation to the building by Hewitt/Daly Architects:

- Restoration of the main lobby, masonry cleaning, and repairs to the historic facade, limited seismic upgrades, including tiebacks added to building facades and bracing of the cornice.
- The elevators were replaced, new exterior signage was added, and the roofing system was replaced.
- Interior renovation of the fifth floor.
- The original windows on the fifth floor were removed and replaced with aluminum-framed windows.
- The retail and storefronts at First Avenue were demolished and replaced.
- The pedestrian walkway at Marion Street was renovated.

## Proposed Project Scope

This proposal is a comprehensive renovation of the building, with a change of use of the upper floors from office to multi-family residential. Approximately 202 residential units will be created. A new penthouse level is proposed, (expanding on the small existing historic penthouse), and a rooftop outdoor terrace is also proposed. The non-original street level storefronts (including at the alley side) will be renovated for new commercial tenants. The existing original windows at the upper floors will be retained and rehabilitated, with insulated glass installed in original wood sashes where it is feasible. The existing historically significant finishes and elements at the main entry lobby, at the upper elevator lobbies, and at the stairwells will be retained.

The project will be classified by SDCI as a substantial alteration, therefore the work will include a complete seismic retrofit, accessibility improvements, and upgrades to mechanical, electrical and fire life safety systems.

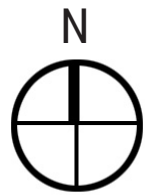
The project will apply for federal historic tax credit program. The design will focus on compliance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards throughout, in order to achieve Certified Rehabilitation with the National Parks Service.

The areas of the building that require a Certificate of Approval are the building exterior, including the roof, the main lobby and vestibule at the first floor, the stairway to the second floor and the vaulted ceiling and supports of the first floor space directly to the north of the main lobby.

We look forward to discussing this project with the Landmarks Preservation Board.

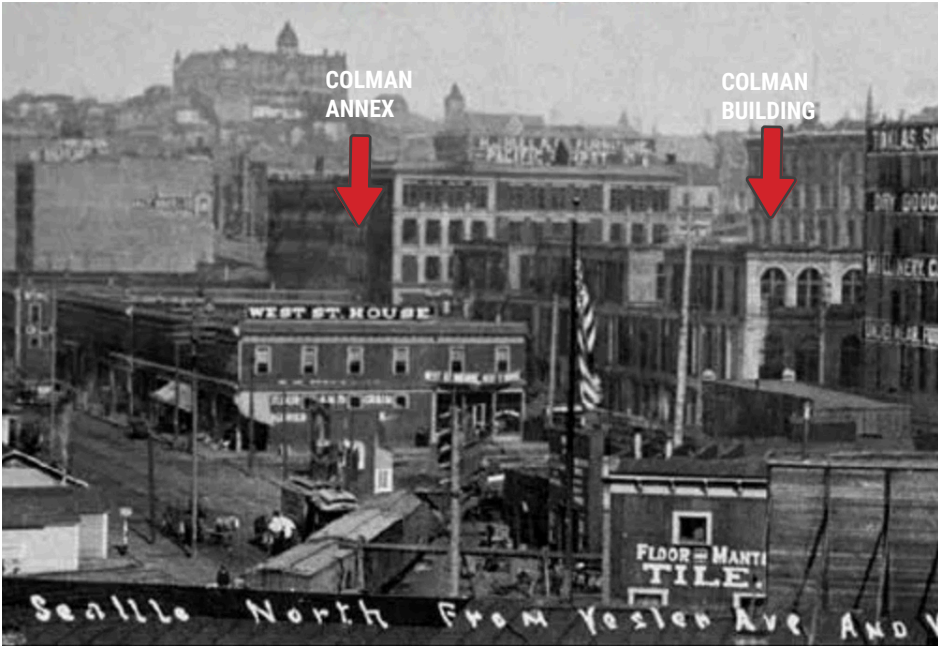


PROJECT LOCATION





HISTORIC PHOTO SURVEY



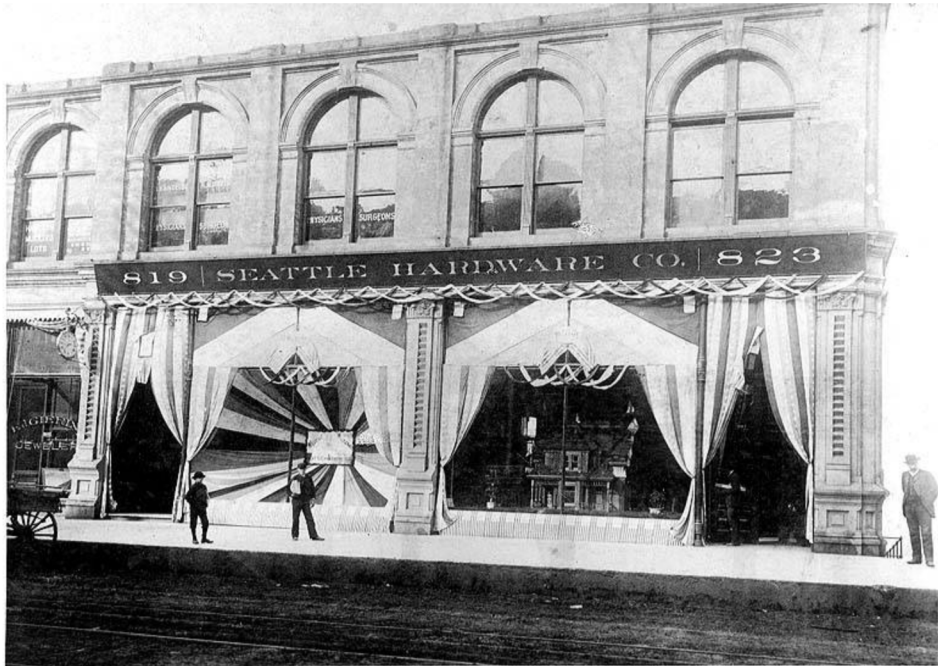
ORIGINAL COLMAN BUILDING AND COLMAN ANNEX (ca.1892)



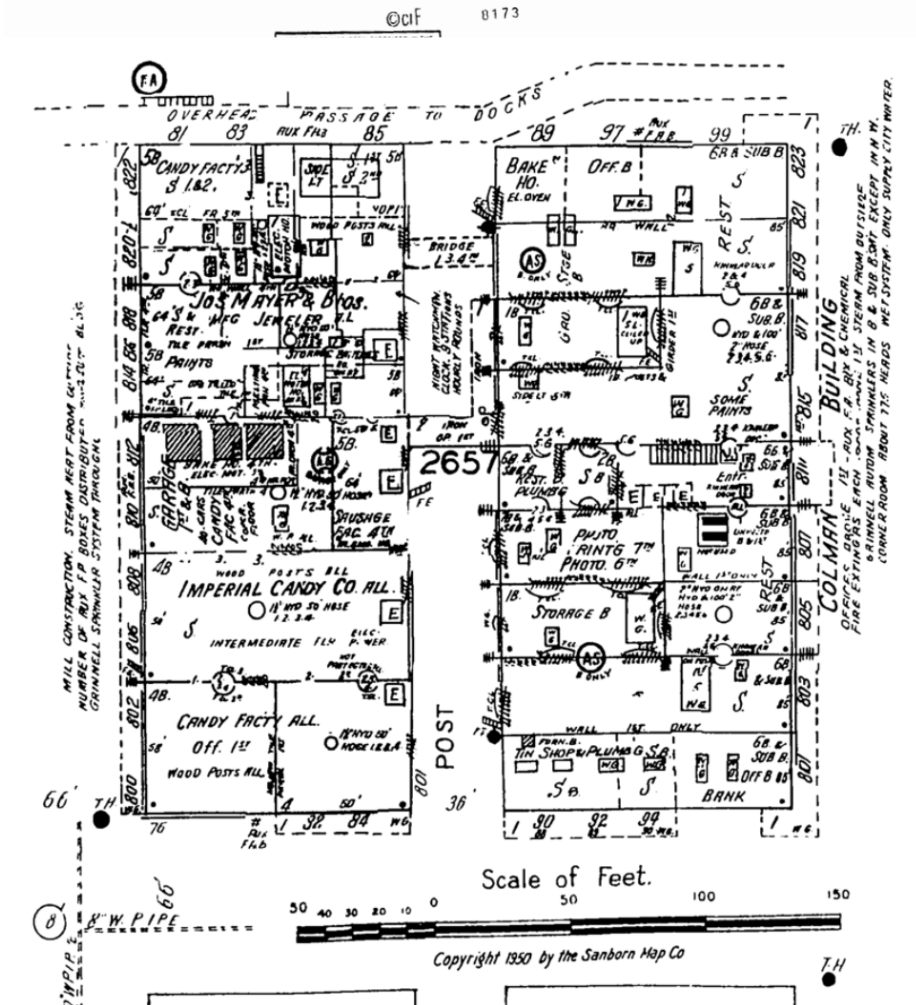
COLMAN BLOCK, CORNER OF 1ST AVE AND COLUMBIA ST LOOKING NORTH (ca.1898)



LOOKING EAST FROM MARION ST. AND WESTERN AVE. (1898)



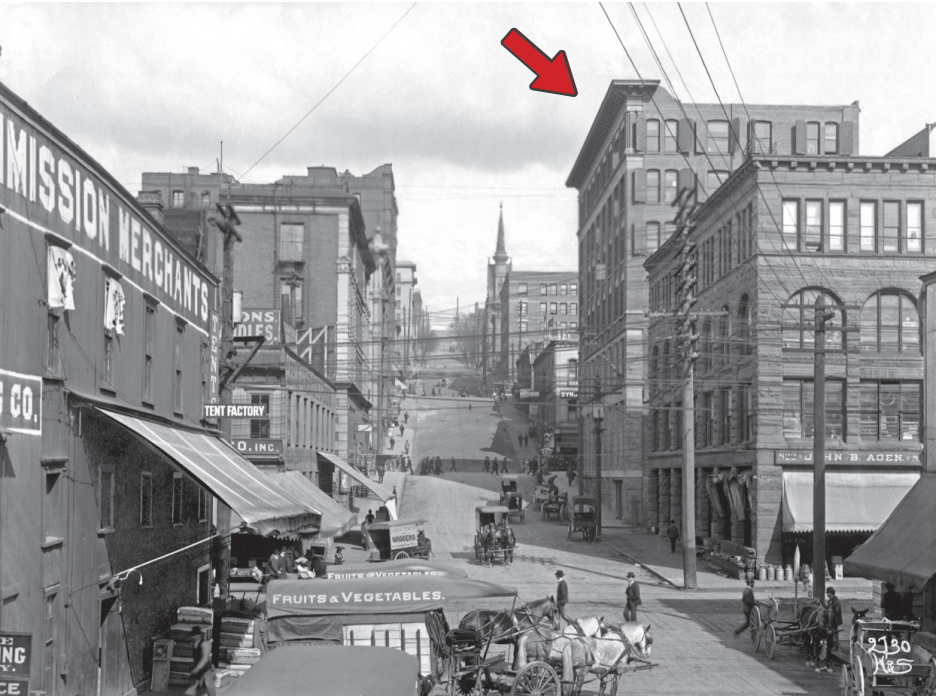
CORNER OF 1ST AVE AND MARION ST. (ca. 1900)



SANBORN MAP COLMAN BLOCK (1905)



HISTORIC PHOTO SURVEY



MARION ST. LOOKING EAST FROM WESTERN AVE. SHOWING ORIGINAL SHUTTERS (1905)



SE CORNER, 1ST AVE. AND COLUMBIA ST. (1909)



AERIAL VIEW (1910)



LOOKING NORTH FROM CHERRY STREET (1906)



NE CORNER, SHOWING THE CONTRUCTION OF THE WALKWAY TO THE COLMAN DOCK (1909)



AERIAL PHOTO SHOWING THE PENTHOUSE ADDITION (1913)



HISTORIC PHOTO SURVEY



CORNER OF FIRST AVE. AND COLUMBIA ST. LOOKING WEST (1916)



INTERIOR AUGUSTINE & KYER GROCERY STORE (1919)



POST AVENUE, SHOWING THE BRIDGE CONNECTION TO COLMAN ANNEX AND LOWER LEVEL WALLS PLASTERED (1956)



MARION ST LOOKING WEST, ORIGINAL WALKWAY AND IRON CANOPY (1916)



CORNER OF FIRST AVE. AND COLUMBIA ST. LOOKING NORTH (1950)



WEST ELEVATION, ARROW SHOWS LOCATION OF DEMOLISHED BRIDGE (1976)





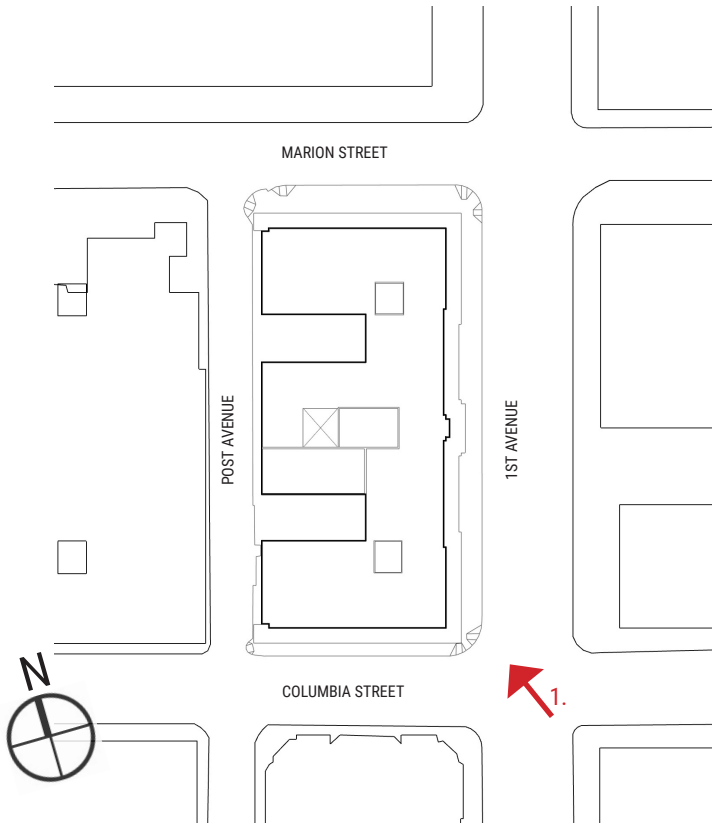
ALASKAN VIADUCT OVER COLUMBIA STREET LOOKING EAST (1953)



EXISTING CONDITION STUDY



1. FIRST AVENUE AND COLUMBIA ST. CORNER





EXISTING CONDITION STUDY



1. SW CORNER FROM POST AVENUE, RUSTICATED STONE (1904) AT THE ORIGINAL STORY LEVELS (1889)



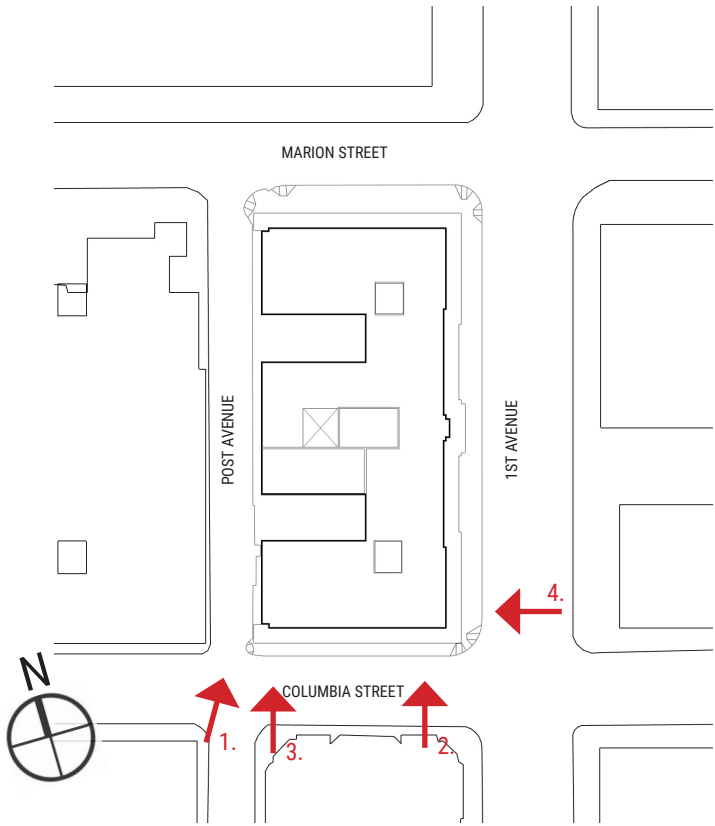
2. SE CORNER, FROM COLUMBIA S., GREEN MARBLE FACADE - CA. 1928



4. SE CORNER, FROM FIRST AVE., GREEN MARBLE AND BRONZE ART DECO DETAILS - CA. 1928



3. WEST END OF SOUTH FACADE FROM COLUMBIA ST., IRON AND GLASS CANOPY - CA. 1916

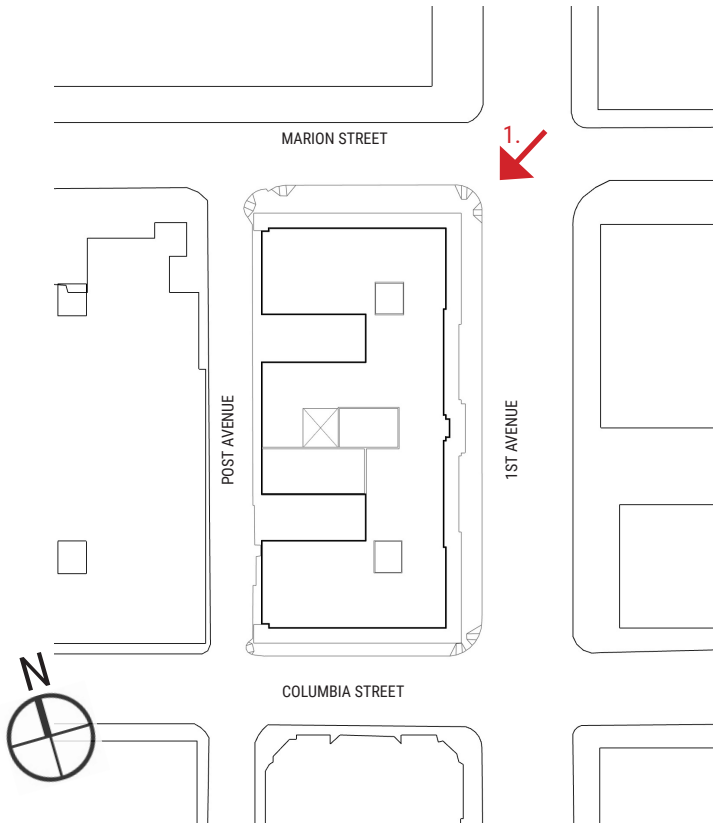




EXISTING CONDITION STUDY



1. NE CORNER FROM MARION ST. LOOKING SOUTH, IRON AND GLASS CANOPY OVER STOREFRONT LEVEL - CA. 1916





EXISTING CONDITION STUDY



1. NE CORNER STOREFRONT - ORIGINAL PILASTERS IN NON-ORIGINAL INFILL (1980'S)



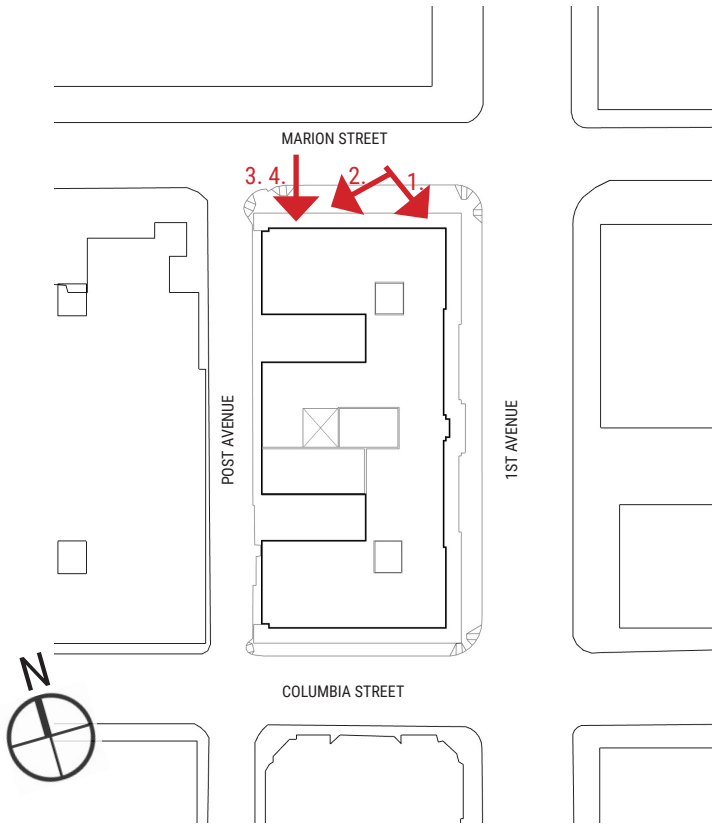
2. NORTH FACADE LOOKING WEST, MARION ST. WALKWAY STOREFRONTS



3. NW CORNER, MARION ST. WALKWAY



4. NW CORNER, ORIGINAL OPENING AND PILASTERS WITH NON-ORIGINAL INFILL - CA. 1980'S





EXISTING CONDITION STUDY



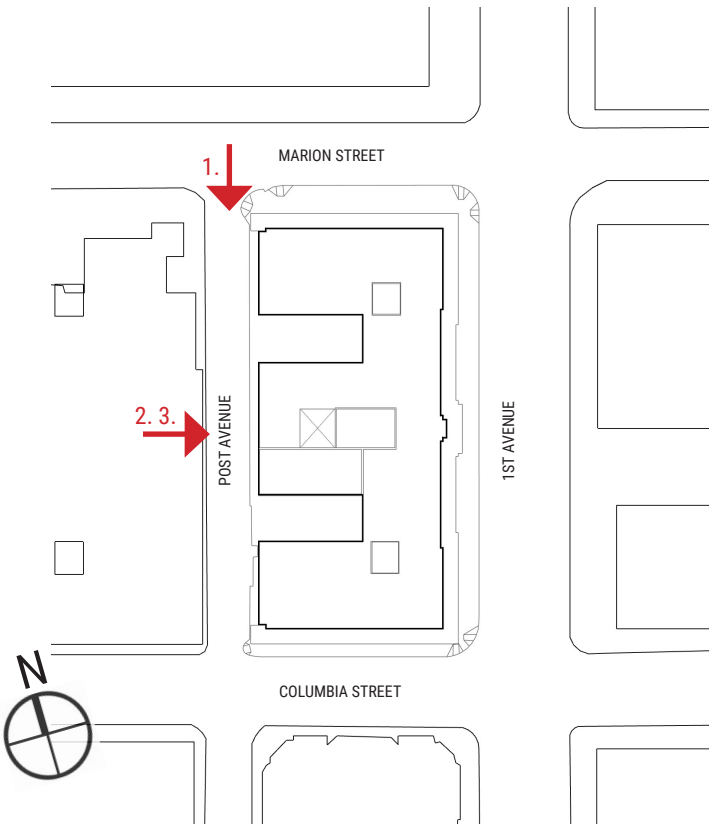
1. POST AVENUE BASEMENT LEVEL ENTRANCES, ORIGINAL PILASTERS WITH NON-ORIGINAL INFILL



2. WEST ELEVATION FROM WESTERN AVE., ORIGINAL FIRE ESCAPES, AND EXISTING PENTHOUSE - CA. 1916  
PHOTO DURING CONSTRUCTION OF THE POST APARTMENTS (2011)



3. WEST FACADE FROM MARION STREET WALKWAY LOOKING SOUTH





EXISTING CONDITION STUDY



1. MAIN LOBBY LOOKING WEST, REMODELED- CA. 1928



3. MAIN STAIRWAY FROM SECOND FLOOR, BRONZE RAILING - CA. 1928



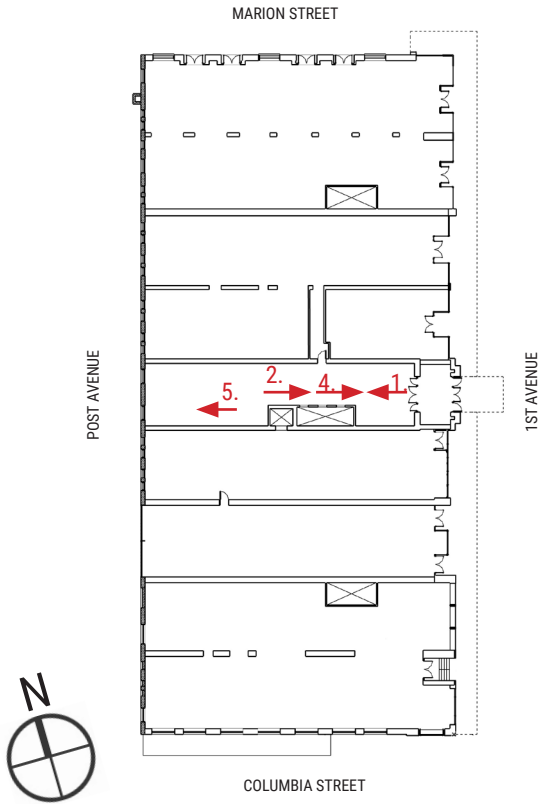
5. MAIN STAIRWAY FROM LOBBY - CA. 1928



2. MAIN LOBBY LOOKING EAST, REMODELED - CA. 1928



4. LOBBY ENTRANCE, DOOR TO VESTIBULE - CA. 1928

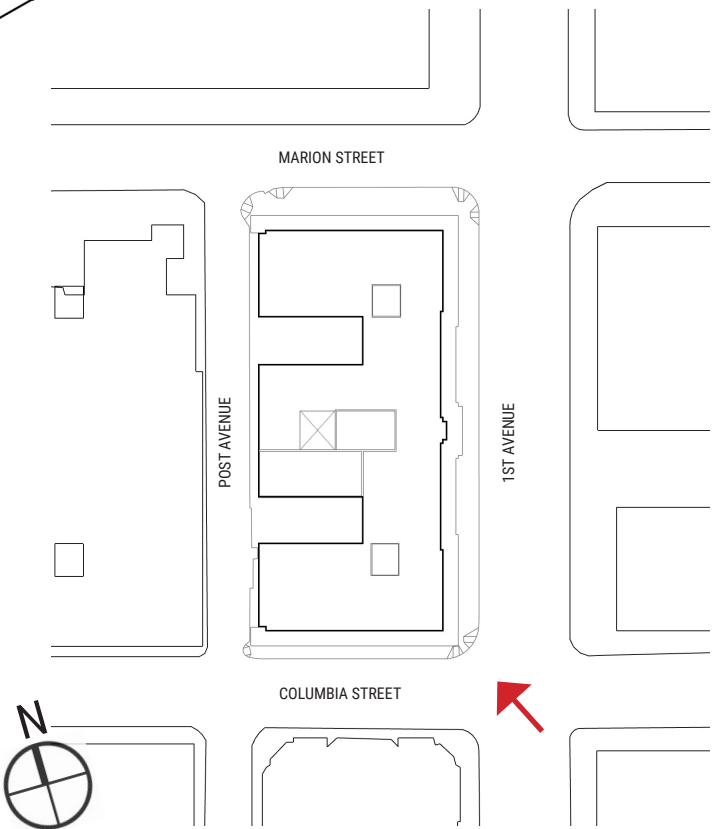




EXISTING CONDITION STUDY



- 1898 ORIGINAL WINDOWS
- 1904 ORIGINAL WINDOWS
- ca. 1916 ADDITION
- 1920-1929 REMODEL
- 1980s NON-ORIGINAL



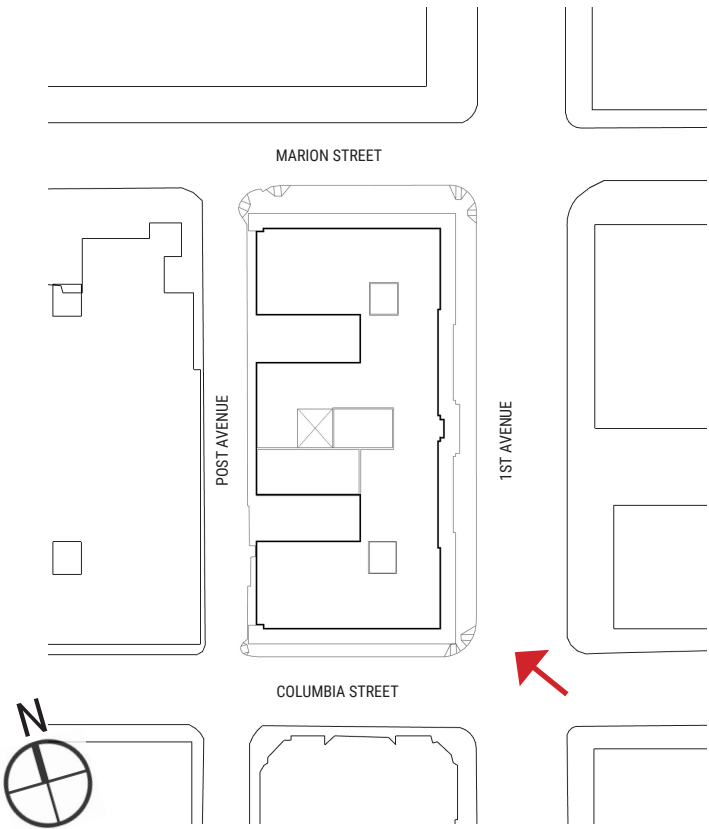


EXISTING CONDITION STUDY



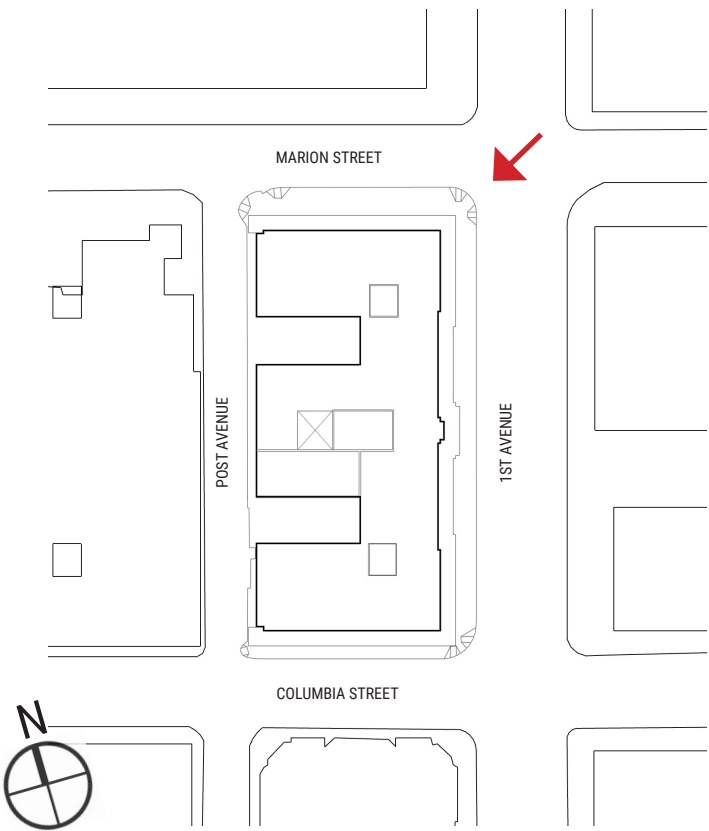


PROPOSED EXTERIOR VIEWS



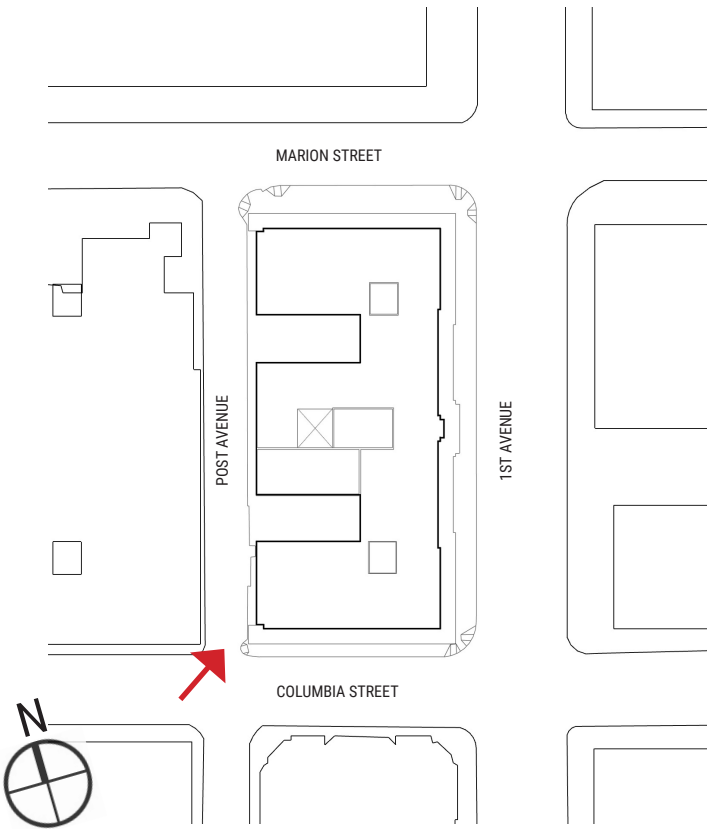


PROPOSED EXTERIOR VIEWS



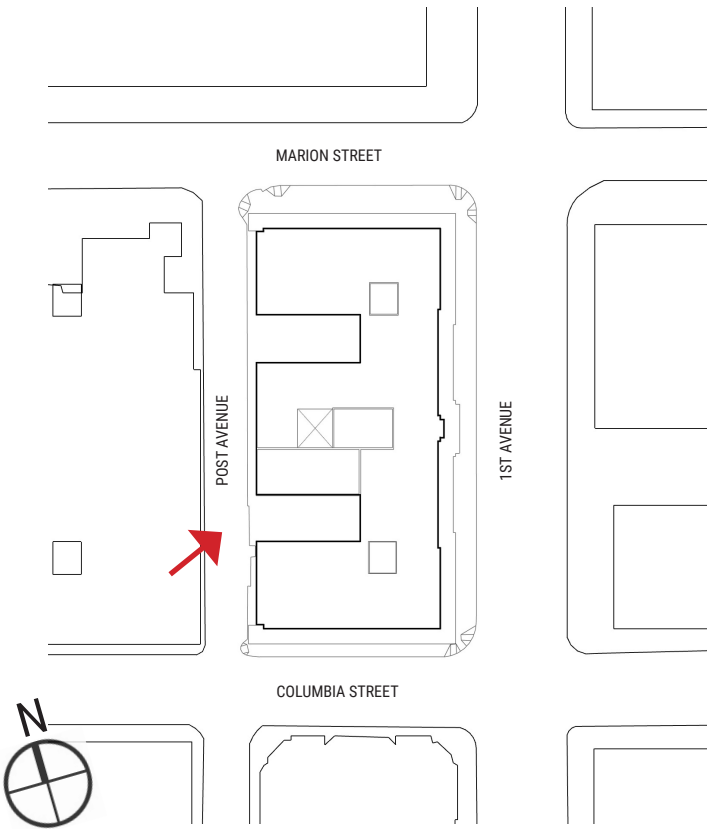
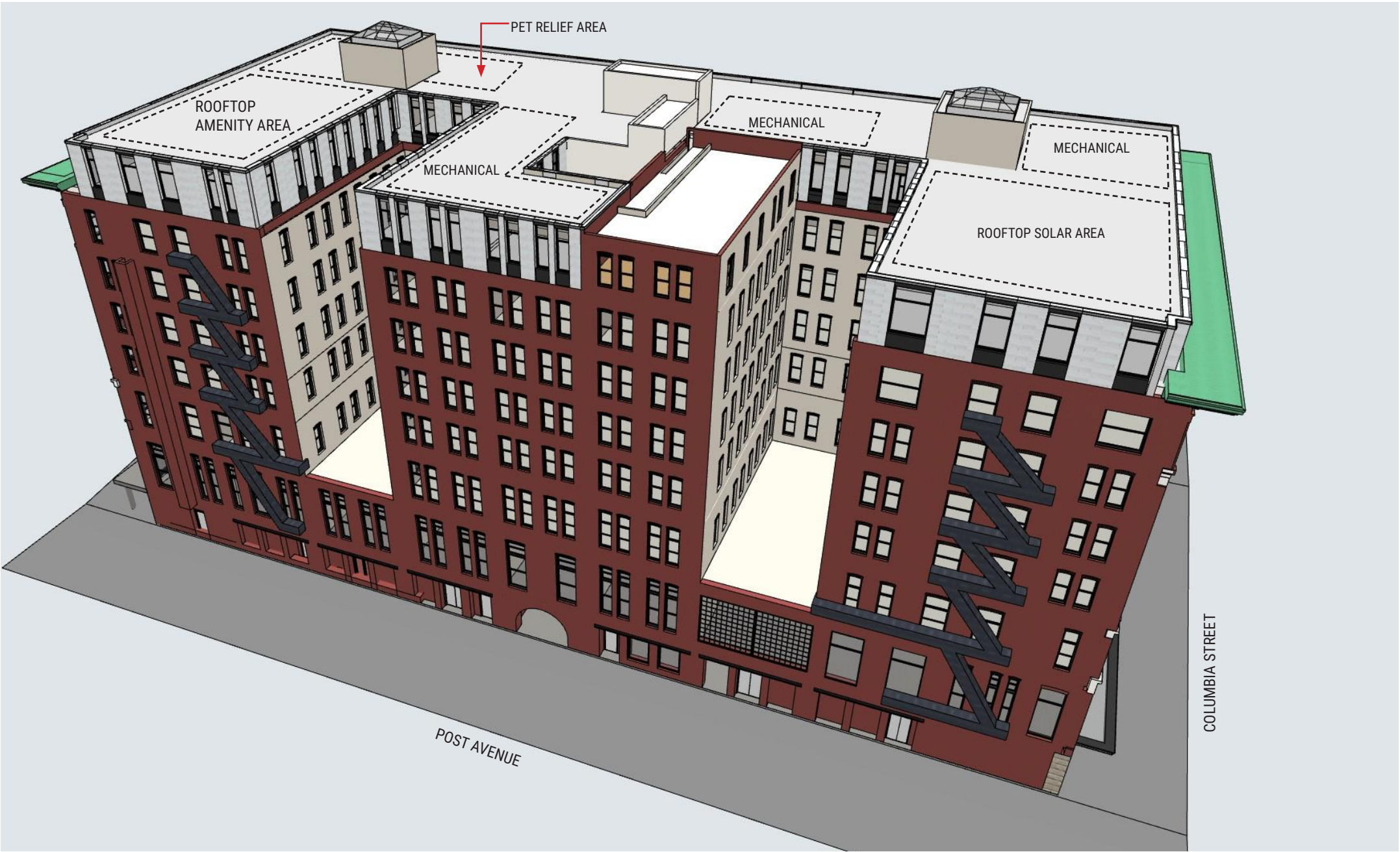


PROPOSED EXTERIOR VIEWS





PROPOSED EXTERIOR VIEWS

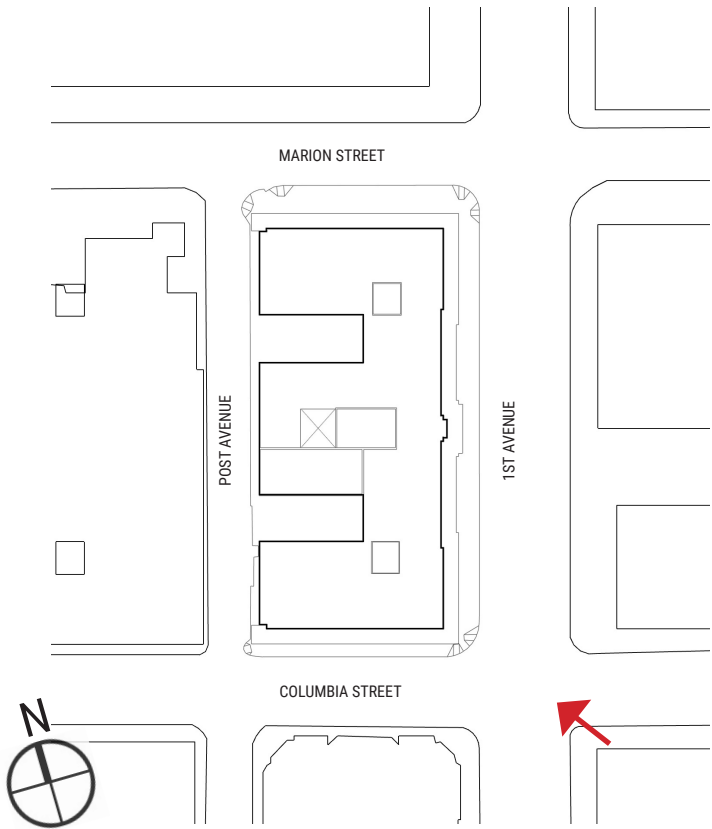




STREET LEVEL VIEW

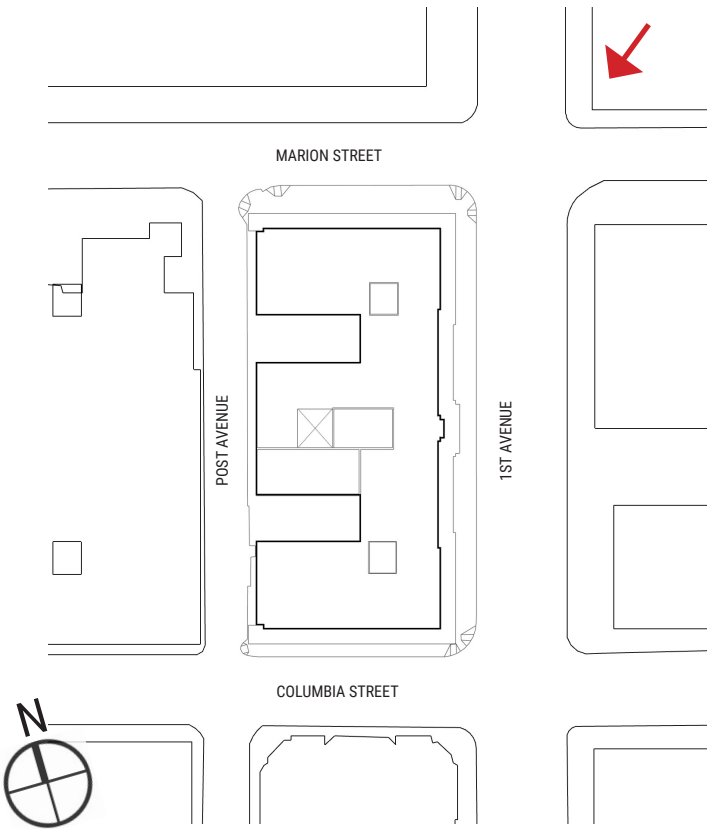


NEW PENTHOUSE NOT VISIBLE FROM STREET LEVEL



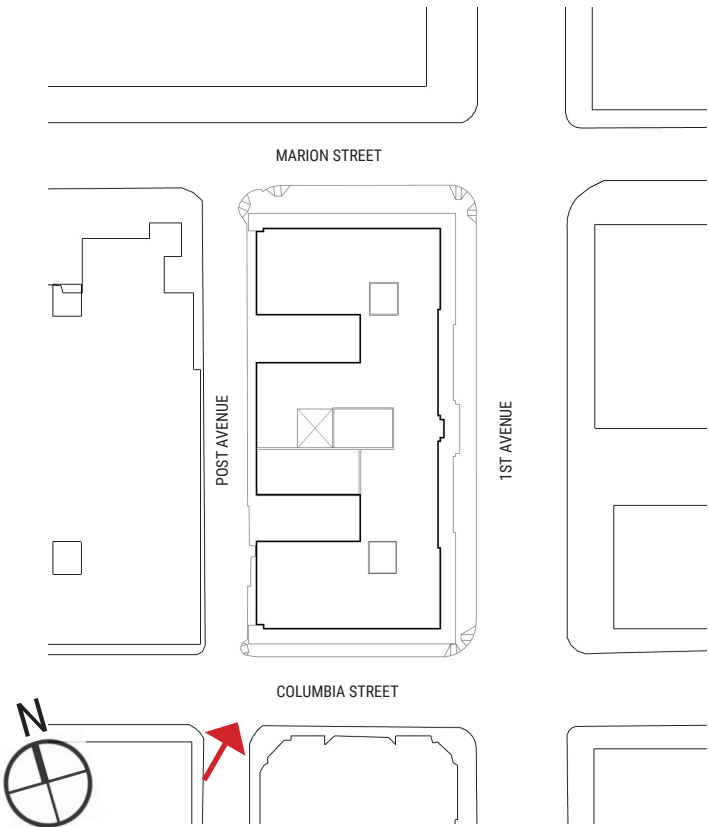


STREET LEVEL VIEW



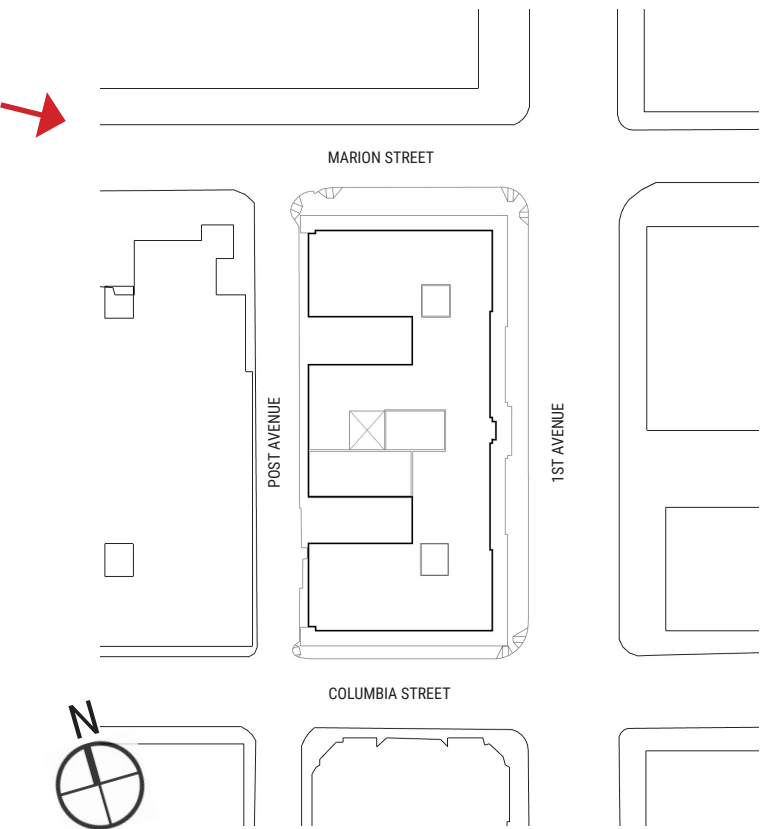


STREET LEVEL VIEW



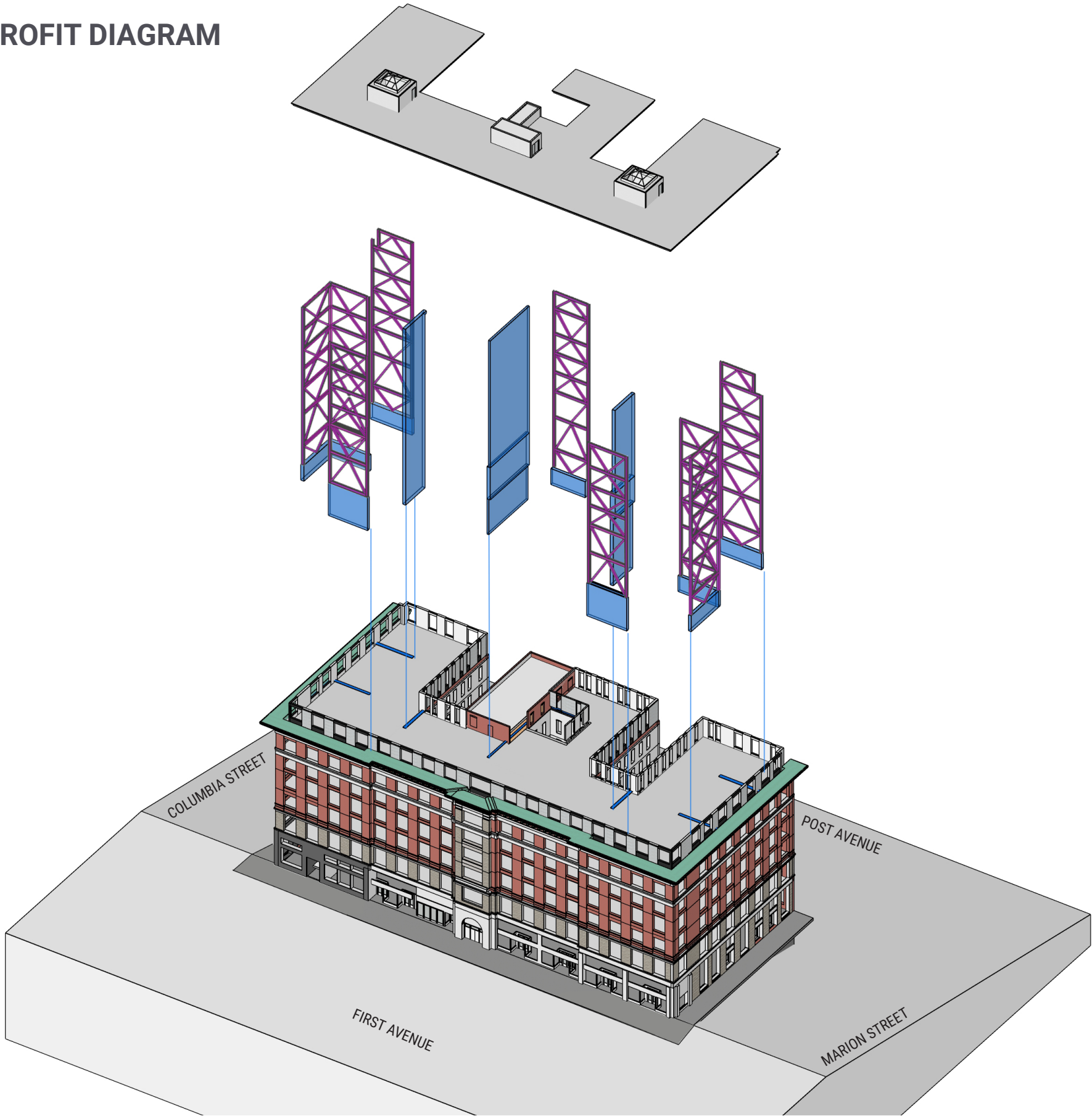


STREET LEVEL VIEW





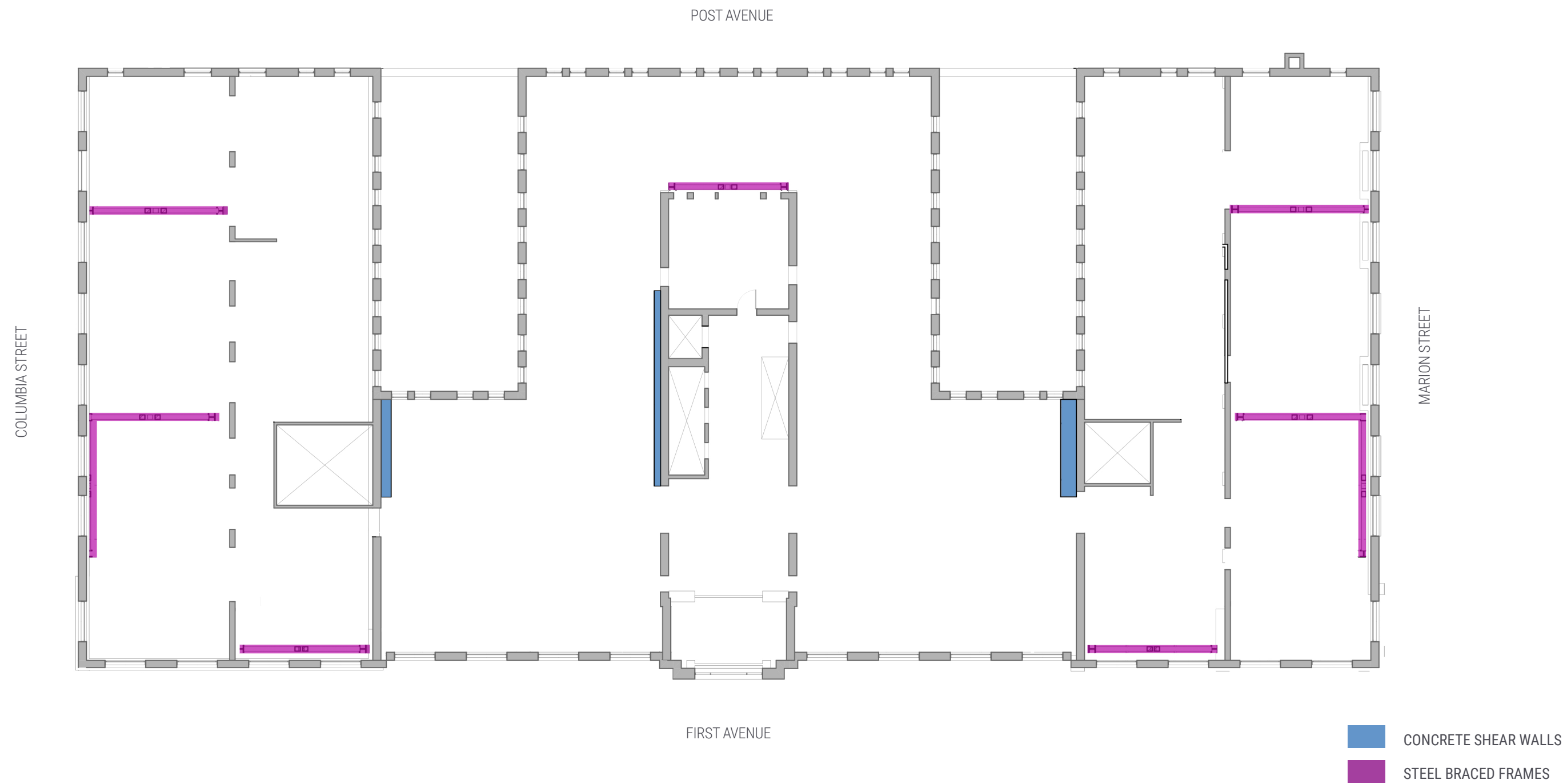
SEISMIC RETROFIT DIAGRAM



- CONCRETE SHEAR WALLS
- STEEL BRACED FRAMES



SEISMIC RETROFIT DIAGRAM



FLOOR PLAN